

# Maurice Hinchey NEWS

## 26<sup>TH</sup> CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT, NEW YORK

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### HINCHEY URGES CONTINUED VIGILANCE IN PROTECTING ROADLESS AREAS

WASHINGTON - U.S. Representative Maurice Hinchey (D-NY) today called for continued support of the U.S. Forest Service's plan to implement a Roadless Area Conservation Policy. The policy, which would protect 58.5 million acres of pristine national forest land, was to have gone into effect today, but has been delayed until May 12 by the Bush Administration.

"I am concerned that the motivation behind this delay may be an attempt to ensure that this landmark conservation achievement is never implemented," Hinchey wrote in a letter to his colleagues in the House of Representatives. "We owe it to generations to come to make sure that any efforts to undo this achievement do not succeed."

Opponents of the Roadless Area Conservation Policy have claimed that it was a last minute rulemaking by the Clinton Administration. Hinchey disputed that claim, pointing to the exhaustive process that led to the development of the policy.

"To say that this is an 11th hour regulation by the previous administration is a gross distortion of the facts," said Hinchey. "This plan is the result of the most extensive public participation process ever undertaken by the Department of Agriculture. At over 600 meetings in every national forest, an unprecedented number of Americans voiced their support for permanently protecting roadless areas."

Hinchey led the fight to prevent road construction and logging in the nearly 60 million acres of U.S. Forest Service land that is not already available for logging, mining, and other kinds of development. In June 1999 he generated a letter that was signed by 168 members of the House of Representatives urging the president to protect roadless areas within the National Forests. He subsequently fought for improvements to the administration's draft proposal that were eventually included in the final plan, including the immediate protection of the Tongass National Forest.